



USS LST-768

Builder: American Bridge Company, Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Commissioned: 4 October 1944

Decommissioned: 15 April 1946

Disposition: Sold for commercial operations on 18 December 1947 to Humble Oil & Refining Company of Houston.

Length: 327' 9" oa

Beam: 50'

Draft: 1' 6" bow, 7' 5" stern (unloaded); 8' 2" bow, 14' 1" stern (loaded -- at sea); 3' 1" bow, 9' 6" (loaded -- beaching)

Displacement: 1,625 (light); 4,080 (w/ full load of 2,100 tons)

Propulsion: 2 x General Motors 12-567 diesels, twin shafts/rudders

Range: 24,000 nm @ 9 knots

Top Speed: 11.6 knots

Complement: 111

Troops: 163

Initial Armament: 7 x 40mm (single mount); 6 x 20 mm (single mount); 2 x .50-caliber mgs; 4 x .30-caliber mgs

Commanding Officers:

LT B. R. Andrews, USCGR:

LT Andrew J. Haire, Jr., USCGR:

LT Neale O. Westfall, USCGR:

History:

USS *LST-768*

LST Flotilla 29, Group 86, Division 172

The Coast Guard-manned USS *LST-768* was built by the American Bridge Company of Ambridge, Pennsylvania. She was launched on 23 September 1944. She was then ferried down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, arriving there on 4 October 1944 where she was commissioned on that same day under the command of LT B. R. Andrews, USCGR. After commissioning she was docked at Todd-Johnson Drydock on 11 October 1944, where her port propeller was straightened and proceeded to Panama City, Florida, on the 12th for shakedown exercises. Final outfitting began at New Orleans on 27 October 1944, and after minor alterations and repairs the *LCT-1264* was placed on the main deck on October 30th, and she was underway to Gulfport on 14 November 1944, to take aboard her first cargo. She was tank deck loaded with creosoted pilings and on 8 November 1944, proceeded to Mobile for repairs to her starboard engine. These were completed on the 14th and she got underway for the Pacific area.

The arrived at Pearl Harbor via Canal Zone, San Pedro and Port Hueneme, California, on 2 January 1945 and arrived at Guam, via Eniwetok on 26 January 1945. She remained there until 7 March 1945, and then proceeded to Saipan. Here she loaded ammunition and left for Iwo Jima on 10 March 1945, arriving on the 13th, unloading under very heavy surf conditions, finally resorting to DUKWs while anchored in the harbor to complete unloading. She left Iwo Jima on 20 March 1945, and returned to Saipan on March 25th, where she was again loaded, this time with U. S. Coast Artillery and again departed on the 8th of April for Iwo Jima. She arrived on the 11th, unloaded and was on her way back on 16 April 1945, where she arrived on the 19th. Again loading ammunition she got underway on the 24th this time for Okinawa where she anchored off Hagushi on 1 May 1945, launched the *LCT-1264* on the 4th and completed unloading on the 11th returning to Saipan on the 18th. Here she was loaded with rations, gasoline and elements of the Marine Corps and departed again for Okinawa on 23 May 1945, arriving on the 30th.

The LST lay at anchor at Okinawa until 5 June 1945, and then proceeded to Iheya Shima, Ryukyu Islands for the initial occupation. Off Iheya Shima on 6 June, 1945, she unloaded to LVTs while at anchor, damaging her ramp gear during the operation but being repaired on the return trip to Okinawa on 7 June 1945, by ship's company. On 10 June 1945, she was en route Leyte arriving on the 15th and on the 23rd she proceeded to Morotai arriving on the 26th to load personnel and vehicles of the 5th Air Echelon. She left Morotai for Leyte, 4 July 1945, arriving there on the 7th and departing on the 9th for Okinawa, arriving on

the 14th. She unloaded at Ie Shima , Ryukyu Islands, and at Seoko Bay by 17 July 1945, and then went to Buckner Bay to load for a return trip to Leyte.

Partially loaded with men and vehicles of the 96th Infantry Division on 19 July 1945, she was forced to put to sea to ride out a typhoon, returning to Buckner Bay on the 20th to complete loading by the 21st. Departing Okinawa on the 22nd she returned to Leyte losing one escort when attacked by an enemy submarine en route, the 768 taking casualties and survivors aboard and act as hospital ship until reaching the Philippines on July 25th. Casualties were delivered to Guiuan on July 27th, and returning to Leyte, the 768 proceeded to Mindoro on the 31st where she unloaded and reloaded the 89th Chemical Company for Subic Bay departing on the 2nd. Underway again for Okinawa on 6 August 1945, she arrived on the 11th and was unloaded by the 14th, returning to Subic Bay on the 22nd. She proceeded to Leyte on the 26th for an annual military inspection of LST Group 61 on the 28th. She proceeded to Guiuan on September 3rd to procure a new LCVP and returned to Leyte that same day. On September 4th she got underway for Lingayen Gulf and returned to Manila on the 7th. On the 14th she had completed loading vehicles and personnel of Company B, 16th Signal Service Battalion for Lingayen Gulf where she arrived on 15 September 1945.

On 18 September 1945, she departed Lingayen Bay for Wakayama, Japan, arriving on 25 September 1945, and completed unloading on the 27th departing for Lingayen Gulf but diverted to Subic Bay because of bad weather where she arrived on 6 October 1945. She proceeded to Lingayen Gulf on the 8th arriving on the 9th to beach and take aboard the 384th Quartermaster Truck Company, U. S. Army. She was unable to retract after being loaded and two LSMs were sent to assist her. She cleared the beach with their assistance on 12 October 1945, and was underway for Sasebo, Japan in convoy. She arrived on the 19th and beached and unloaded on the 22nd, anchoring in Sasebo Ko.

Here she was assigned to "Guinea Pig" operations on first runs over newly swept channels and transferred her excess fuel and all ammunition to *LST-1053*. On the 29th her main engine room controls were moved to the wheelhouse to make unnecessary keeping anyone below during the "Guinea Pig" runs. On the 23rd, 42 men were transferred to skeletonize the crew for the runs and loading lube oil and muriatic acid aboard she sailed for Iki Shima. She remained there until the 28th and then got underway for Tukuoka for the runs. Here on the 28th the runs were made with an 18 man crew and CTG 52.17 aboard the *LST-553* being in company. No men were allowed below and all hands wore life jackets. On the 29th the No. 1 auxiliary engine lost all lube oil feed and was damaged beyond repair before anyone could reach it leaving the ship with only two auxiliary engines. The runs were completed 14 December 1945, the fortitude, cooperation and cheerfulness of the crews during this hazardous duty being a credit to the men of the ship and service.

Returning to Sasebo on 6 December 1945, the LST was released from COMINPAC on 10 December 1945 and proceeded to Pearl Harbor on December 14th, where she arrived 2 January 1946. She departed for New Orleans on 10 January 1946, via San Pedro and the Canal Zone, arriving there on 16 March 1946. She was decommissioned on 15 April 1946.

The *LST-768* was awarded three battle stars for her service during World War II.

Photographs:

None available.

Sources:

LST files, Coast Guard Historian's Office

United States Coast Guard. *The Coast Guard At War. V. Transports and Escorts. Vol. 2.* Washington: Public Information Division, Historical Section, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 1, 1949, pp. 66-116.

United States Navy. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.* Volume VII. Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1981, pp. 574-742.

